under:-

(i) Supply of Bed rolls to all the passengers in AC 3 tier coaches without realising the cha rges;

(ii) Introduction of tatkal reservation scheme in a large number of trains;

(iii) Linking of Delhi & Secunderabad PRSs with Calcutta PRS, thereby providing on line reservation facility to passengers for trains defined on Calcutta, New Delhi and Secunderabad PRSs;

(iv) Introduction of Passenger Information System for providing up-to-date information about train running, etc. in Delhi and Mumbai;

(v) Provision of computerised reservation facility at various towns;

(vi) Provision of Interactive Vocie Reponse System at some stations;

(vii) Introduction of new IRY coaches in Swarna Shatabdi Express for better ride index;

(viii) In the direction of providing cooking free platform, sophisticated bainmarie machines have been provided to start with at New Delhi Station. This will provide fresh and hot meal prepared in the hygienic condition;

(ix) Two superfact trains from each Zonal Railway have been identified for providing upgraded passenger amenities, including catering services with a view to provide better services to the passenger travelling long distance;

(x) Railways have spent Rs. 40.13 crore up to September, 1998 for provision/ augmentation of amenities at stations like extension/raising/widening of platforms, renovation fo station buildings, provision of Food-over-bridges, augmentation of waiting facilities, drinking water supply, washable aprons, etc. at various stations all over Indian Railways;

(xi) Public Address system introduced on EMU services in Mumbai Area;

(xii) Quality of Train lighting improved by converting 24 V system to 110 V system.

1213 No. coaches converted from April to October, 1998, etc.

Pilgrim train for pilgrim places in Hyderabad

762. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to introduce a pilgrim train, on the lines of Palace on Wheels, originating and terminating at Hyderabad, with stops at Mantralayan, Puttaparthi, Tirupati and other places of pilgrim importance;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) A proposal to introduce a special train on this circuit has been received from the State Government of Andhra Pradesh. The introduction of the train can be considered if suitable offers are received for investment, management and marketing of this train from the tourism industry or other potential investors from the public/private sector.

Railway crossing in Assam

763. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of railway crossings in Assam;

(b) the number of such crossings on which underbridges or overbridges are proposed to be constructed; and

(c) the reasons for not constructing such bridges in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) 1275 nos.

(b) and (c) Railways under take replacement of existing busy level crossings with Road over/under bridges on cost sharing or on deposit terms depending upon the volume of traffic at the level crossing in question. Following this criteria 4 level crossings at Bongaigaon, Rangia, Changsari and Athgaon have already been sanctioned for re-placement with Road over bridge on cost sharing basis and their work is at various stages of planning in consultation with State Govt. Proposals for Road over bridge/Road under bridge's are examined when sponsored by the State Govt. duly fulfilling all the preliminary pre-requisite from time to time.

Train accidents in Vijayawada Division

764. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister RAILWAY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that several train accidents took place in the Vijayawada division of South Central Railway due to derailments;

(b) if so, the number of such accidents in the Division during the last one year and reasons for each accident; and

(c) steps taken by the Govt. to ensure saftey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Sir, there were 15 derailments on Vijayawada Division on South Central Railway (During 1997-98). The reason of accidents were due to human failure, equipment failure and other miscellaneous factors.

(c) Steps taken to bring down the incidence of train accidents on Indian Railways are as under:—

(i) The work of track circuiting has been accelerated on the trunk routes and other important main lines.

(ii) Modification of the signalling circuitry has been carried out to minimise changces of human error in causing accidents.

(iii) Auxiliary Warning System for giving advance warning about 'Signal at danger' to the driver of the running train has been commissioned on Bombay suburban sections.

(iv) There has been progressive increase in use of the Tie Tamping and ballast cleaning machines for track maintenance.

(v) For monitoring track geometry and running characteristics of the track, sophisticated track recording cars, oscillograph cars and portable accelerometers are being progressively used.

(vi) Maintenance facilities for coaches and wagons have been modernised and upgraded at many depots.

(vii) To prevent cases of cold breakage of axles, Routine Over Hauling Depots have been equipped with ultrasonic testing equipment for detection of flaws in the axles.

(viii) Whistle boards/speed breakers and road signs have been provided at unmanned level crossings and visibility for drivers has been improved.

(ix) Autido-visual publicity campaigns to educate road users on how to make a safe crossing are conducted.

(x) Steps have been taken to prevent inflammable and explosive materials from being carried in passnger trains.

(xi) Training facilities for drivers, guards and staff connected with train operation have been modernised including use of Simulators for training of drivers.

(xii) Refresher courses are regularly organised at specified intervals.

(xiii) Performance of the staff connected with train operation is being constantly monitored and those found deficient are sent for crash training.

(xiv) Periodical safety drives are conducted to inculcate safety consciousness among the staff.